

## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

### Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup



In Bangor, Maine, locals boast that, after marrying *Mayflower* descendant Joseph Winslow, Mrs. Charlotte Noyes Winslow (1789–1850) formulated an opiate-laced syrup to soothe the restlessness of her simultaneously teething twin daughters in 1807. A younger sister of those twins would marry a druggist who, with a junior partner, would form “Curtis & Perkins,” the firm that would market “Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup” (*above*) from Bangor and then New York to North America and the British Commonwealth. Legislation and then litigation would reduce morphine content per fluid ounce of this 24-proof elixir from its original 65 mg of morphine in the 1830s to 26 and then 0 mg in, respectively, 1911 and 1915. Although branded a “Baby Killer” by the American Medical Association, this nostrum would be sold until the 1930s, more than 80 years after the syrup had, ironically, soothed Mrs. Winslow’s sore throat but failed in curing her terminal case of scarlet fever. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at [www.anesthesiology.org](http://www.anesthesiology.org).)

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